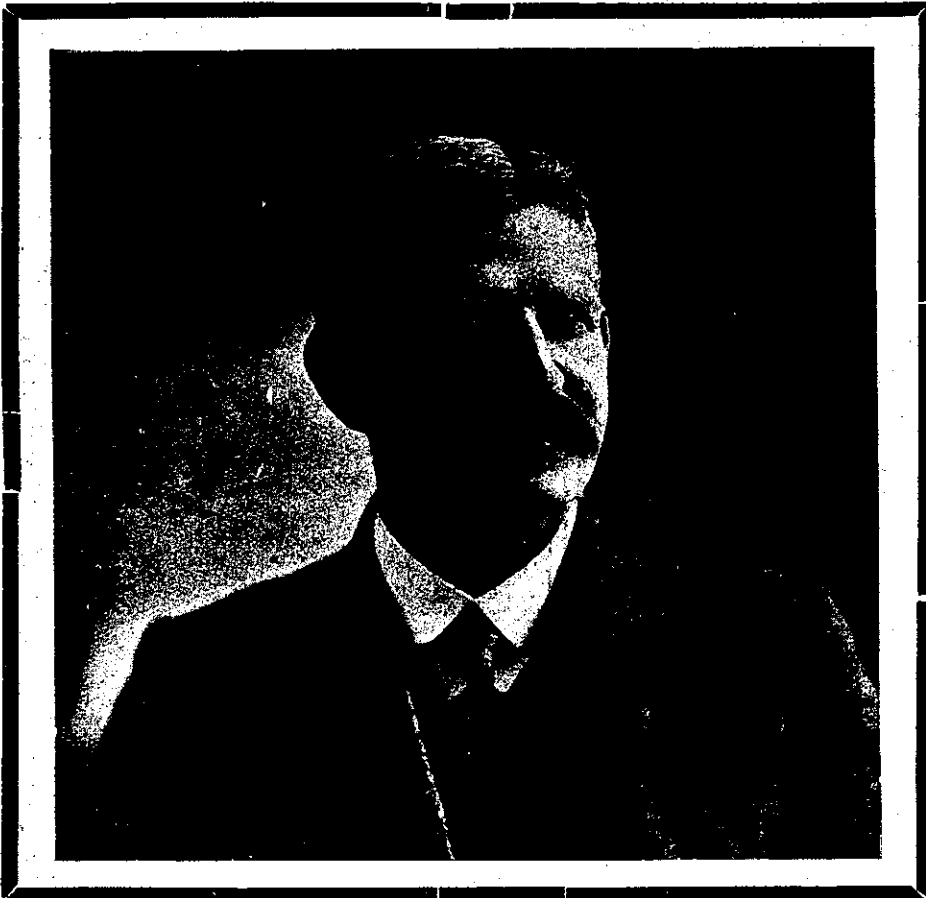




From time to time we have heard of mistakes being made in arriving at the dividends payable to tote investors in different parts of the Dominion. They were very common years ago, and while the public were sometimes underpaid, it often happened that the mistakes had been made to the loss of the tote proprietors or the club for which the machines were worked. Mistakes are less frequent and the risks are reduced to a minimum, though they still occur, and will continue to do so, no doubt, to the end of the chapter. That investors are liable to be underpaid nowadays is less likely than was the case at one time. The figures are there for them to read, and it is a common thing to find men who can tell the dividends before they are posted by the machine workers, who have totalisator clerks acting as a check on each other. During a period of well over a third of a century—indeed, extending to nearer forty years—since the totalisator was first established or run in connection with racing in New Zealand, we have been present at meetings held in pretty well every province and in different parts of every province, and we have known of mistakes that have been made that have cost clubs or the totalisator proprietors a lot of money. The one that occurred at the Taumarunui meeting, and which resulted in the investors being paid well over £200 too much—and they were all paid before the mistake was discovered—was the first that we can recall over a three-horse race; and it was such a simple one, too. Each of the three starters—Hupana, Pink Tie and Sultane—were well supported, and Pink Tie, the winner, was more fancied than Hupana, who ran second. In arriving at the dividend, the total, after making the commission and war tax deductions, was divided by the amount invested on Hupana, the second favourite, instead of by the amount invested on the winner, and backers thus received about 8s. per ticket too much. It was an unfortunate error, indeed, and a costly one for those concerned, as in all our experience we have never known totalisator proprietors or clubs running their own machines to receive refunds from investors. An odd one or two have done the right thing, but the majority are not built that way, and the losses of clubs or tote workers or proprietors are treated as a bit of good luck for themselves. It would be very interesting indeed to learn what proportion of the overpaid money at Taumarunui or on any other racecourses in the Dominion has been refunded. As far as the Taumarunui mistake is concerned most of those who backed Pink Tie would not know of it until the information appeared in the papers, and some of the back-block visitors may possibly not have heard of it even now.

A totalisator case of still more interest than the one referred to above is that in which the Canterbury Jockey Club's secretary, Mr. W. H. E. Wanklyn, was involved last week, not that the club's official was in any different position to what any other secretary of a racing club in New Zealand might have been placed in at one time or other had action been taken when the occasion offered. The taking of money for investment on racing events up to the very last moment by a large staff of clerks and the issuing of tickets is a big contract. Their registration is another matter, and this, under the existing conditions under which the totalisator permits are issued, imposes a responsibility upon clubs not to issue tickets after the time announced for starting, and to have all investments duly registered, before races are started. There were two charges brought against the official referred to. The first was for allowing £20 to be received on the totalisator in respect to a horse named Cast Iron in the Middleton Hurdle Race after the advertised time of starting. The second charge was that he did take into account in the calculation of the dividend the said £20, which investment was not registered in accordance with the

provision of the Gaming and Lotteries Act, 1908. The first charge was dismissed, and on the second a fine of twenty shillings was imposed. We long ago offered the suggestion that there should be a telephone round the courses, and that no race should be started before a notification was received by the starter that everything was in order at the totalisators. That would be one way of making sure that no mistakes would occur. The decision in this case is an important one, and we would not be at all surprised if at no distant date the Government were asked to appoint officials to attend meetings and see that all is in order. The Government draw a big share of the profits from the totalisator, and the tax is the easiest one collected of all forms of taxation. Any losses through mistakes have to be borne by the clubs or totalisator proprietors, but the Government is always sure of a dividend whether a loss is made over a meeting or not. With their experiences before them, the Canterbury Jockey Club, and other clubs, would no doubt welcome the presence of a Government representative and the public would probably appreciate the appointment of such an official.



THE LATE MR. J. F. HARTLAND, SECRETARY OF THE AUCKLAND RACING CLUB, WHOSE DEATH OCCURRED ON FRIDAY LAST IN A PRIVATE HOSPITAL.

Death has removed from our midst a prominent racing official and citizen in the person of Mr. J. F. Hartland, for twelve years past secretary to the Auckland Racing Club. He was only ill for about ten days, so that his death came as a surprise and a shock to his numerous friends and those with whom he was known in business affairs throughout the Dominion. Born in Canterbury in 1862 and educated at Christ's College in Christchurch, the late Mr. Hartland was well-known in the South Island also; indeed, it was there that he was a prominent man in cricket, football and athletic circles. He was associated with the Trust and Loan Company in Christchurch before going into business in Queensland, where he remained about five years. Returning to Canterbury he held a position with the Tramways Company, Ltd., for about 15 years, and was later appointed to the position of secretary to the Auckland Racing Club, whose business developed enormously during his term of office, until it has become one of the leading clubs in Australasia. Mr. Hartland leaves a widow, a daughter and two sons, one of whom, Mr. J. L. Hartland, is on active service, while Mr. C. F. Hartland, the other son, returned from Egypt about

twelve months ago and is with the firm of Messrs. Williams and Kettle at Waipukurau, H.B. The funeral of the deceased on Saturday was a very large one, testifying to the appreciation in which he was held. After a short service at St. Aidan's Church, Remuera, the Rev. A. H. Fowler officiating, the interment took place at the Purewa Cemetery. In the cortege were some thirty motor cars and a waggone with the racecourse staff. The chief mourners were Mr. C. F. Hartland and Miss E. M. Hartland. The pall-bearers were Messrs. T. R. Hill, A. Young, F. Yonge, R. Hill, W. S. Spence, and G. Wynyard. The committee of the racing club was represented by Messrs. H. O. Nolan, W. C. Somers, and R. W. Duder, the stewards by Messrs. C. Ranson and M. M. Louisson, and the office staff by Mr. W. S. Spence. Amongst others present were the Rev. W. Beatty, Messrs. J. J. Kingston, W. Frater, S. Hesketh, W. Casey, A. Wylie (city electrical engineer), and G. N. Pierce, and many owners and trainers. A large number of floral emblems were received, including tributes from the New Zealand Racing Conference and the principal southern racing clubs.

Desert Gold's arrival in Australia has created no end of interest, and sporting pressmen have been devoting some attention to her qualifications, and have referred to her performances in the Dominion, estimating her efforts quite at their full value. The sporting public dearly love a good horse, and Australian racegoers have been prepared to see an equine lady out of the common taking on the strongest opposition that can be pitted against her. That she will be fit to do herself justice we sincerely hope. That she can be got fitter than she was when she raced at Ellerslie and at Trentham we fully believe, as she was above herself when she ran on both occasions. It has been given out that it will depend upon how her owner regards her running on February 23rd, in the Futurity Stakes, the most valuable engagement to be made for her, whether she will run in the Newmarket Handicap, in which she has been awarded 9.13, top weight. This race is set down for March 2nd, and we can take it as a foregone conclusion that the Australian Cup, in which she has 9.4, which is 4lb. below the weight awarded the imported horse Lanius and 1lb. below the impost on Lingle (perhaps the best stayer in Australia), is not to be her mission. There are not very many horses claiming double engagements—that is, in both races—but of the good ones in each we find Desert Gold with 9lb. less in the long race than in the shorter one, and Cetigne, who can be regarded as one of the best in Australasia, handicapped at the same weight in both events. He is evidently not regarded as sufficiently brilliant now for a six-furlong race against a mare like Desert Gold, and is treated as a horse more likely to stay a longer journey than has yet been set him. We are not looking for Desert Gold to appear in handicap events, but will be interested to learn how she compares herself when up against the best of the horses on the other side on weight-for-age terms. The St. George Stakes, a nine-furlong race, run on Saturday, is a weight-for-age race with the condition that horses that have never won a stake of 250-sovs. are allowed 14lb. This is a fair allowance for the cracks to make, and it is in some quarters expected that it will be in the race mentioned that Desert Gold will make her debut. At the time of writing (Tuesday) we are, of course, not in possession of the information as to whether that engagement has been made for her, and what other good ones have been entered in the race. A race over that distance will suit a number of the horses engaged in the Australian Cup and Newmarket Handicap, and it will be interesting should such as Lanius, Lingle, Wallace Isinglass, Cetigne and Woleroi, to say nothing of the best of the three-year-old division, take on the New Zealand crack. The St. George Stakes is run over a distance that should suit Desert Gold right down to the ground, if she has done sound work since arriving in the Commonwealth, but it seems unlikely that she will have any very easy tasks ahead of her.

Mr. Wynne Gray is back in Auckland from Australia, looking well.

Polydamon will not be a starter at the Wanganui meeting, and we cannot answer for Mullingar's movements after the Hamilton meeting.

W. McKinnon was riding at Gisborne, where he was successful on Kolinahina. No one will begrudge the ex-soldier his success.

Almoner's Middle Park Plate time, 1min. 12 2-5sec., is a record, being three-fifths of a second better than was registered by Emperor.

W. Rennie has had an appeal to the Auckland District Racing Committee lodged on his behalf against the decision of the Takapuna Jockey Club by whose committee he was suspended from riding for six months after the recent meeting there.

The Auckland Racing Club has lost in the late Mr. J. F. Hartland a good officer and a methodical worker, who always had the departmental business of the club well organised and attended to. He won the respect and esteem of those who were employed by the club, as well as of the owners and trainers and horsemen, and the many patrons of racing who visited Auckland, and well earned the name of being a popular official, which goes a long way towards the success of such institutions. There are so many to be satisfied, and business capacity, tact and strict attention to the requirements of all was a strong point with the deceased in the discharge of his duties. While the meetings were under his control everything has worked like machinery, due to the proper arrangement of each department and the selection of assistants, who have had a training in the work allotted them. Mr. Spence, who has been associated with the secretarial department of the Auckland Racing Club for a number of years, has proved a capable first lieutenant, and will miss his chief greatly, as, indeed, will the staff members in different departments.